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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - BUOYANT TFG PRESIDENT DESCRIBES OUTREACH EFFORTS AND STATUS OF TFG SECURITY FORCES

Classified By: Ambassador Michael E. Ranneberger for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary: On August 7, just before returning to Mogadishu following his meeting with the Secretary (septel), a buoyant Transitional Federal Government (TFG) President Sharif provided more detail to the Ambassador on some of the TFG's efforts to make progress on the ground in Somalia. Sharif told the Ambassador that he had lobbied leading Hawiye clan elders while in Nairobi to drum up support the TFG. To date, the TFG had provided one part of Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (which has led some of the fighting in the central regions) with \$100,000 in aid. Sharif was "thinking about" changes to his cabinet, and to that end had tasked the Prime Minister to make a proposal. Sharif thought that the Prime Minister would be traveling to Puntland soon. He described relations between Puntland and the TFG as already good, and thought that if political cooperation could be cemented, security cooperation would follow. The TFG President attempted to place the lack of coordination among the TFG's fractious security forces in perspective. He argued that TFG and Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) forces had been enemies when the TFG - ARS alliance was made, and that it "takes time" to overcome enmities. On-going fighting with al-Shabaab had further delayed needed reform of the TFG armed forces, he said. Sharif thought that his August 6 meeting with the Secretary had done much to change perceptions of the TFG among skeptics abroad and in Somalia. He hoped that more USG engagement would follow that meeting. An August 6 meeting with President Kibaki had produced promises of GOK assistance, but nothing concrete. End summary.

¶2. (C) On August 7 before returning to Mogadishu, TFG President Sheikh Sharif met with the Ambassador in order to discuss in more detail some of the problems facing his government. Sharif was visibly buoyed by his meeting with the Secretary (septel). He exuded confidence, and seemed very focused and energetic, which had not been the case in our last meeting with him on the eve of the AU Summit in Sirte. Accompanying Sharif to the meeting were Foreign Minister Omaar, Deputy Prime Minister Hassan, the President's Chief of Staff Jama, and Somalia's Envoy to Kenya Ambassador Nur "Americo."

Outreach to the Mudulood

¶3. (C) Sharif agreed with the Ambassador that more energetic TFG outreach to potential allies was necessary. He had just come from an all-afternoon session with leading, Nairobi-based members of the Mudulood. His "enemies" in the Mudulood had been subdued in their remarks, Sharif said. In the end, the Mudulood pledged their support to the TFG. (Note: The Mudulood comprise the Abgal, Isse, Wadalan, and Hilifi, and Hawadle sub-clans. Separately, Ambassador "Americo," who has been behind efforts to get Sharif to win

support from the Abgal, told us that 80 Mudulood representatives, including former Prime Minister Ali Gedi and former Somalia President Ali Mahdi had attended the meeting. Gedi fits into the enemies category that Sharif talked about.
End note.)

Outreach to ASWJ

¶ 4. (C) Sharif insisted that the TFG was deeply engaged with Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'a (ASWJ). His government had provided \$100,000 in two tranches to ASWJ forces in the central regions to date. (Note: The President said nothing about a TFG-funded supply flight to ASWJ forces in Guriel (Galgaduud Region), which the Prime Minister had promised us would fly on July 31. We understand that the flight did not take place. End note.) Sharif was scheduled to meet ASWJ representatives immediately after his session with the Ambassador.

¶ 5. (C) Sharif divided ASWJ into two groups: the Qadiriyah which, he said, derived its name from twelfth-century spiritual leader Abdul-Qadir Gilani. Deputy Prime Minister Sharif Hassan, Sharif said, was descended from Gilani. The second, the Ahmediya, "includes all Somalis," and ASWJ is its proper name. The Prime Minister reached agreement to cooperate with the Ahmediya on June 16 in Nairobi, Sharif said. The agreement at present is to pay the salaries and expenses of a fixed number of ASWJ troops. Unfortunately, Sharif continued, there are many factions in the Ahmediya, and it is necessary to distinguish among groups. Some of those groups are headed by "politicians," who are attempting

NAIROBI 00001698 002 OF 003

to benefit from the agreement to cooperate with the TFG. Their presence has slowed efforts at mutual assistance, Sharif concluded. (Note: Somalia Unit agrees with Sharif that there are many claimed ASWJ members trolling for support from the TFG and/or from the USG. End note.)

Cabinet Changes Under Consideration

¶ 6. (C) Sharif thought that it might be time to re-shuffle the Cabinet and to that end he had tasked the Prime Minister to make a proposal. Mudulood representatives had suggested that two Mudulood ministers be appointed. Sharif had accepted their recommendation. Any change in the composition of the cabinet would be used to re-engage all groups, Sharif said, and he promised that there would be intense discussions with all interested groups in advance of any cabinet changes.

Outreach Trip to Puntland Promised

¶ 7. (C) The President insisted that relations with Puntland were good, and that the Prime Minister would be traveling to Puntland for meetings with President "Faroole" immediately after the President's August 8 return to Mogadishu. (Note: Sharif has reportedly been pressing the Prime Minister for some time to travel to Puntland. All indications are that the Prime Minister is reluctant to undertake that trip. End note.) It was important to first forge strong political relations, Sharif thought. Once they were strengthened, more concrete forms of cooperation would fall into place. Sharif praised Foreign Minister Omaar for his work with the Somaliland government. (Note: Omaar has clan and family roots in Somaliland. End note.)

Integration of TFG Troops Needed

¶ 8. (C) Sharif agreed with the Ambassador that creation of a better-integrated TFG security force was essential. He nevertheless believed that the TFG had accomplished much in a short time, and reminded the Ambassador that ARS and TFG

troops had been "shooting at one another" until a formal TFG - ARS alliance had been forged. Also delaying progress, Sharif said, was the fighting. Sharif singled out Colonel Ageweyne and (no rank given) Gobale for their leadership of their ARS contingents. Gobale's troops, he said, have high morale and are the most numerous, with one thousand on the frontlines and another 1500 in camps awaiting training.

¶ 19. (C) Later in the conversation, Sharif urged aid in training and equipping what he said were five hundred TFG naval troops. (Note: No further detail provided.) He also asked that the TFG be supplied with additional weapons and ammunition. Also on Sharif's list was a request for armored vehicles that could be used for secure transportation of TFG officials. (Note: AMISOM has provided secure transportation for TFG officials, but the TFG is traditionally reluctant to be seen as too closely allied with AMISOM as it attempts to conduct its business in Mogadishu. It appears that fear of assassination attempts and a reluctance to be too closely associated with AMISOM have effectively reduced the amount of outreach that the TFG does. That outreach appears essential to expanding the government's writ in Mogadishu. End note.)

Efforts to Lobby Potential Donor Nations

¶ 110. (C) After the Ambassador had urged Sharif to lobby potential donor nations for support, Foreign Minister Omaar briefly described his efforts. They included, he said, three meetings with Iraqi Foreign Minister Zebari and one meeting with the Iraqi Ambassador in Washington. President Sharif had met Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki, who had promised five million dollars and even requested the TFG's bank account number. No money had been deposited to date, Omaar said.

¶ 111. (C) Omaar had also met with the UN Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs, Saudi national Abdul Aziz Arrukban, who had access to King Abdullah and was lobbying on behalf of the TFG. The TFG Prime Minister had established a committee, Sharif continued, tasked with having donor countries make good on their pledges. Omaar was a member of that committee.

Kibaki Makes More Promises

NAIROBI 00001698 003 OF 003

¶ 112. (C) In an August 5 meeting with Sharif, Kenyan President Kibaki had promised to train a number of TFG officers, as well as potential TFG forces at a site close to the Kenya - Somalia border. The TFG officers would be brought to Kenya "for a few weeks of orientation," Sharif said. The GOK also promised that the TFG could have use of Kenyan transportation assets (NFI) currently located in Mombasa. (Comment: the GOK has been talking about military assistance to the TFG for six weeks. Embassy has seen no sign that concrete planning for assistance is underway, but we are ascertaining their seriousness through various channels. The GOK's track record on its promise of assistance to wounded TFG troops (see below para), as well as on a 2008 promise of military training, make us skeptical. End comment.)

¶ 113. (C) Sharif reported no progress in efforts to get President Kibaki to make good on his promise of use of a wing of Kenyatta Hospital for treatment of wounded TFG troops. (Note: That promise was made during a June 18 Kibaki - TFG Prime Minister Sharmarke meeting. Ambassador has made strenuous efforts to get the GOK to make good on its promise, including a telephone call to Foreign Minister Wetangula and, most recently, a letter to the Foreign Minister. The letter is still unanswered. The Ambassador has also twice visited the TFG wounded and met the press afterward in an attempt to draw attention to wounded troops' plight.) Ambassador "Americo" reported that the TFG to date had paid \$360,000 to Kenyan private hospitals for the treatment of TFG troops and,

on July 22, was billed an additional \$440,000, which it had yet to pay.

¶14. (C) Mounting medical bills and a significant number of wounded TFG troops in Somalia argued, Sharif said, for a degree of TFG self-sufficiency, and he asked if the USG could provide mobile medical clinics for field treatment of wounded soldiers.

Meeting with the Secretary
Changes Perceptions, Energizes Sharif

¶15. (C) Sharif believed that his August 6 meeting with the Secretary (septel) had changed perceptions among skeptics within Somalia and abroad. He urged that it be followed by further USG engagement with his government and Somalia. The meeting with the Secretary, and the message of support she had conveyed from President Obama, had made him determined to re-double his efforts. Sharif underscored the continuing need for military advisors, as well as for capacity-building for key TFG ministries.

¶16. (C) Sharif also urged that the international community do more to prepare Somali refugees in the Dadaab refugee camp and elsewhere to become productive citizens. He noted that very few Dadaab refugee children receive an education, and underscored the urgent need to prevent them from becoming alienated and potential fodder for al-Shabaab.

Comment

¶17. (C) In his August 7 meeting with the Ambassador, Sharif seemed relaxed, confident, and newly energized. The meeting with the Secretary had confirmed USG support for his government, and he seemed determined to get back to Mogadishu and tackle the difficult tasks ahead, as well as to press the USG for more concrete assistance to his government. There is much for the TFG to do. It has not been able to take advantage of a relative lull in the Mogadishu fighting and reports that some al-Shabaab forces have been pulled out of Mogadishu in order to launch a counter-offensive. Somalia Unit will engage with Mudulood representatives for their take on the meeting with Sharif. Their active engagement could materially help the TFG in key districts of Mogadishu and elsewhere.

RANNEBERGER